

Secretary of State Marco Rubio
Statement before the
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

June 2, 2026

Thank you, Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished Members of this Committee for inviting me to address you today.

It has been about a year and a half since President Trump returned to office and I was sworn in as Secretary of State.

Under President Trump, the purpose of American foreign policy is once again the defense of the American nation: our people, our homeland, our sovereignty, our civilization, and our future.

We believe that America should lead the world. But we believe that American leadership should always be *on behalf of American interests*. We are a global superpower – the most powerful country on Earth. We have the largest economy and the most formidable military ever known to man. Our dollar is the world’s reserve currency. Our language is the lingua franca. But all of that means very little if that power is not used to protect the people who built it – the people who it is meant to protect.

The U.S. government is not a charity. We are not here to play social worker. We are here to *win* – to win for our country, for our people, and for our interests. That is what the State Department exists to do.

That principle has guided every decision we have made since January 2025.

President Trump has taken back control of our hemisphere. For too long, we’ve allowed hostile regimes, cartels, criminal gangs and foreign adversaries to run rampant in our own backyard. We allowed the sworn enemies of the United States to use countries across the Western Hemisphere as a forward operating base against the American people.

That ended on day one of this administration. We confronted MS-13, Tren de Aragua, and the other evil cartels as the terrorist organizations that they are – and built a transcontinental coalition to defeat and dismantle them. Not just with words, but with actions. Narco-cartel boats ferrying their poison into our borders were not met with strongly worded letters, but with the full weight of American firepower.

We brought an anti-American despot in Caracas to justice, in one of the most extraordinary feats of lethal precision in military history. American Special Forces crossed a hemisphere, penetrated one of the most heavily fortified capitals in the region, neutralized the regime's military infrastructure, and removed Nicolás Maduro from power within hours.

The Maduro regime was not simply another corrupt dictatorship. It was a hub of regional disorder: exporting criminals, empowering cartels, collaborating with hostile powers, and turning mass migration into a weapon aimed northward at the United States. Today, the narco-terrorist dictator who had emptied his prisons into our cities and turned his country into a beachhead for our adversaries has been brought to justice by President Trump.

We have made it clear to every government in this hemisphere that America can either be their greatest friend or their most feared enemy – the choice is theirs. But cooperation with the United States on questions that concern our interests is not optional. We have used our trade relationships, our financial leverage, and our diplomatic standing to bring the nations of Central and South America into alignment with our priorities. And now, they are active partners in the work of intercepting illegal migration, dismantling cartel networks, and accepting back their own nationals.

We also carried out the most ambitious, comprehensive and successful reorganization in the history of the Department. We consolidated offices, eliminated redundant and cumbersome bureaucracy, streamlined our entire workforce, and empowered our regional bureaus to actually do their jobs. We restored discipline and unity of purpose to the Department's voice and mission in the world.

We transformed the way we do foreign aid. Programs that failed to advance American interests were ended. USAID's old model was replaced. The foreign assistance that remains is being brought under the strategic direction of the State Department, where it belongs – and every dollar we spend today is one hundred times more effective, efficient and aligned with the American interest than it was when President Trump took office.

Foreign aid, properly understood, is a valuable tool – a key instrument of statecraft. But every dollar of our assistance must make America safer, stronger, or more prosperous. This was the guiding principle of our reform: It must serve the American interest – or it should not be paid for by the American people.

That is why our new model emphasizes trade over aid, investment over dependency, and mutually beneficial partnership over permanent patronage.

This budget request before you today strengthens that mission.

It contains billions of dollars of investment in a revolutionized approach to foreign assistance – seen in frameworks like our new America First Global Health Strategy, which we are already building through dozens of new bilateral assistance agreements, aligned with core American interests around the world.

It reinforces and bolsters American economic dominance through programs like the America First Opportunity Fund, financing key strategic investments, securing access to critical minerals, rebuilding American supply chains, and developing American competitiveness in the industries of the future.

It provides for robust security investments to disrupt and dismantle transnational drug trafficking networks, and allocates a historic investment in diplomatic security, to enhance our global security posture and keep our people, our property, and our interests safe as they operate in the most dangerous corners of the world.

All of this and more is a reflection of this administration's belief that foreign policy cannot be separated from economic policy, border policy, energy policy, or any other sphere. A country that cannot build ships, produce medicine, control immigration, or access vital resources cannot defend its people, its interests, or its way of life.

So our foreign policy is being reoriented around the real foundations of national strength. This budget is yet another step in that direction.

I look forward to your questions. Thank you.